

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by Colonel Kiems
of the Joint Staff

DATE: December 17, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Kissinger
General Haig
Commander Howe
Colonel Kiems
Colonel Carlson

The following are excerpts from the December 17, 1972 briefing:

Dr. Kissinger: Why where there so few tacair sorties north
of the DMZ?

Colonel Kiems: They were merely weather cancellations.

Dr. Kissinger: I know but that is not a hell of alot.

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Dr. Kissinger: (Referring to report that a number of bags of rice
being floated by Chinese ships off North Vietnam
had been sunk.) How do you sink a bag of rice?

Colonel Kiems: With shells.

Dr. Kissinger: I know how they try to do it, but how do they sink it?

Colonel Kiems: They puncture the bags.

Dr. Kissinger: What is in the area there?

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Colonel Kiems: It is just an anchorage where they all floated.

Dr. Kissinger: No, I mean is it a major population center?

Colonel Kiems: No, part of Binh Tram is located there.
They dump the rice overboard and hope the tide
will carry it to shore.

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Colonel Kiems: (Described the operation in which 35 Mark 52
mines were dropped in the Haiphong straits.

Dr. Kissinger: Was there any antiaircraft fire?

Colonel Kiems: No.

Dr. Kissinger: Did they do any armed reconnaissance?

Colonel Kiems: There was one drone up. They had scheduled
a SR-71, but had to cancel it because of the weather.

Dr. Kissinger: Can't they fly it in bad weather?

Colonel Kiems: They didn't think they would be able to see anything.